School Implementation Challenges Summary

In an effort to better achieve its goals of increased customer satisfaction, reduced costs, and increased employee satisfaction, the Office of Student Financial Assistance (SFA) initialized an improvement in the process of delivering student financial aid. This modernization effort recognizes a need for a Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) process. The need is based on the fact that steps required to deliver financial aid for grants, loans, and campus-based programs are similar enough to be handled by a single process. It was decided that a common process and system to support origination and disbursement is critical for SFA to achieve its vision of an enterprise-wide architecture to provide real-time data to students, schools, and financial partners via web portals.

Recognizing that the COD implementation will have a major impact on schools' business processes, several high-level challenges have been identified. As the COD process evolves and more schools provide feedback additional challenges may be recognized and will be incorporated into the COD implementation plan, the implementation status report, and the pilot program. The COD implementation plan will, on a high level, address training and resources necessary to transition schools to COD. It will further discuss the potential impacts to other SFA business processes and systems, as well as the necessary steps schools, third party software vendors, third party servicers and guaranty agencies will need to take to implement COD. The COD implementation status report will document the status of the initial COD implementation activities, as well as any executive level risks or issues. A pilot school participation approach will also be prepared to identify schools that are willing to be among the first to implement the COD process.

Now that high-level challenges have been identified, the next approach is to determine more specific challenges in relation to differing types of schools. In order to address the issues specifically related to school types, the COD process will be simulated using a variety of scenarios involving each school classification. In addition, we plan to invite more SFA personnel to our meetings and eventually solicit feedback from the community. These challenges that have already been identified, as well as others that have yet to be determined, will be incorporated into the COD implementation plan, the status report, and the pilot program approach.

SCHOOL CHALLENGES	CORRESPONDING OFFICE
Buy-in from schools' upper management that reengineering has to occur at a high-level, not just in the individual offices.	Institution-Wide
Preplan before reengineering.	Institution-Wide
Learn how to leverage COD to thrive not just survive.	Institution-Wide
Schools must identify what services they want to provide.	Institution-Wide
Understand and readapt business processes according to the new practices at SFA. (i.e. modify system edits, alter record layouts, organize the separate processes into one Financial Aid process, understand new options under COD so schools can leverage the new process, etc.)	Institution-Wide
Squeeze uncertainty out of schools' systems	Institution-Wide
Fund the changes necessary for implementing COD process.	Institution-Wide
Improve internal communication between offices to convey how COD will effect their business processes and how they should reengineer accordingly.	All offices
Reengineer business processes to account for COD.	All offices
Retrain and/or hire new staff to expedite the COD requirements.	All offices
Adjust business process schedules to reflect the new COD timeframes.	All offices
Data integration between all offices.	All offices
Profile and segment students into error and non-error prone populations allowing schools to process rejects, SAP, and program eligibility in a more efficient manner.	All offices

Date Updated 8/22/00

SCHOOL CHALLENGES	CORRESPONDING OFFICE
Develop contingency plans while implementing the COD process.	All offices
Reeducate the students (i.e. behavioral changes) to reflect the new changes in business processes.	All offices
Admit students into an eligible program earlier so students can have money when school begins.	Admissions
Collect data and transfer it to SFA in the correct format. (record layouts, etc.)	Financial Aid
Integrate data with Bursar, Registrar, and Admissions in advance of receiving funding.	Financial Aid
Report disbursement date to SFA prior to the actual disbursement.	Financial Aid
Report records at the student-detailed level for Campus Based Programs.	Financial Aid
Manage cashflow during implementation of COD to reflect any new cash management rules.	Bursar
Develop contingency plans (i.e. short term loans) in order to assure that eligible students whose records have not been submitted in a timely manner will not be denied funding.	Bursar
Determine SAP sooner to account for the new COD process	Registrar
Transfer credit evaluations more quickly so schools can take advantage of new edits.	Registrar
Determine tuition residency earlier to get money to students when school begins.	Registrar
Have the power, speed and capacity to send batch jobs over the web. Schools may need new technology (encryption) to marry back to SFA.	IT
Obtain the ability to make exceptions to existing state programs regarding IT rules.	IT
Increase technical support to other departments.	IT
Persuade schools' third party vendors and third party servicers to attend ED's quarterly vendor conference.	IT

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SCHOOL CHALLENGES	CORRESPONDING OFFICE
Hire, retain, and fund technical staff to modify schools' systems. With the implementation of the new COD process the need for technical support will be even greater.	IT
Recognize that some schools may be bound by differing regulations regarding cash management (ex/ Schools under the Treasury Agreement).	Misc.